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## **SENATE SHOULD VOTE 'YES' ON CORKER-TOOMEY MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES TO H.R. 5895**

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the authority to set trade policy, including the power to impose tariffs and regulate foreign commerce. Over time, Congress delegated much of this authority to the executive branch. This rough balance worked for approximately 80 years, as a bipartisan consensus in favor of trade liberalization served as a bulwark of peace and prosperity. Today, however, that consensus is fraying, due to irresponsible decisions made by President Donald Trump, the most protectionist president since Herbert Hoover.

Since the beginning of 2018, the United States has embraced a failed protectionist agenda that threatens to undermine economic growth and undercut vital foreign alliances. Today, you have the opportunity to begin to undo some of the damage caused by the president's ill-advised decision to impose steel and aluminum tariffs pursuant to Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.

Section 232 allows the president to impose tariffs or other restrictions if the import of certain covered products threatens to impair U.S. national security. As R Street has [highlighted](#) repeatedly, there is no national security or economic rationale to impose costly tariffs on steel and aluminum products. The president recently directed the U.S. Department of Commerce to begin a Section 232 investigation into whether imports of automobiles and automotive parts threaten national security. Obviously, they do not.

Though R Street strongly encourages Congress to do more to restrict President Trump's unilateral trade authority, the nonbinding Corker-Toomey-Flake Motion is a good first step to rein in executive branch abuse of Section 232. Accordingly, R Street urges all senators to vote "Yes" on the Corker-Toomey-Flake Motion to Instruct.

Sincerely,

Clark Packard  
Trade Policy Counsel  
R Street Institute